

## About the AGC.

The Attorney Grievance Commission of Maryland was established in 1975 to help regulate Maryland lawyers' professional behavior, investigate their conduct when complaints are filed and oversee their discipline, if necessary. The AGC also seeks to prevent the unauthorized practice of law.

In addition, the Commission provides financial support to the Lawyer Counseling Program of the Maryland State Bar Association. This program was created to aid lawyers who have an addiction to alcohol or drugs, a mental illness, a gambling problem or who have poor office procedures. Because some complaints result from these issues, the Lawyer Counseling Program works to aid in the prevention and detection of problems and to provide help.

In short, the AGC's main purpose is to assist in protecting the public by enforcing the professional standards that regulate the conduct of lawyers and by educating lawyers about their professional responsibilities.



### Attorney Grievance Commission of Maryland

People's Resource Center  
100 Community Place, Suite 3301  
Crownsville, Maryland 21032-2027  
410-514-7051

[www.mdcourts.gov/attygrievance/index.html](http://www.mdcourts.gov/attygrievance/index.html)

# Having problems with your lawyer?

# The Attorney Grievance Commission of Maryland is here to help.

The Attorney Grievance Commission (AGC) works to ensure that Maryland lawyers adhere to the highest standards of professional ethics, whether they're explaining and interpreting the law for you, representing you in legal matters or appearing in court on your behalf.

But despite this commitment to maintaining high standards and keeping you informed and educated about your case, issues sometimes arise. Should this happen, first try to solve the problem by having an open and honest conversation with your lawyer. If this doesn't work, you can file a complaint with the AGC. The AGC will then review your complaint to determine if an investigation is warranted.

Understanding the roles and responsibilities of both you and your lawyer will help you determine if you need to contact the AGC.

## **What your lawyer needs from you.**

Clear and open communication is the key to maintaining a productive, positive relationship with a lawyer. To help avoid costly and lengthy miscommunications, always:

- Come to meetings prepared.
- Clearly communicate your wishes and expectations.
- Establish and understand a fee arrangement at the beginning of your representation.
- Ask questions if you don't understand something.
- Disclose all information and background on your case.
- Promptly discuss and resolve miscommunications with your lawyer.

## **What your lawyer should provide.**

- An honest appraisal of the likelihood of the case's success.
- Prompt disclosure of alternative ways to resolve a matter.
- Copies of court documents and letters.
- A satisfactory explanation of your case's status at your request.
- Adequate and prompt attention to your case.
- Reasonable and timely bills and descriptions of expenses.

## **How to handle a problem.**

If you are not satisfied with the service provided by your lawyer, first try to resolve it by meeting with him or her. But if talking doesn't work, you can file a complaint with the AGC. There is no charge

for this. The AGC will investigate your complaint, if warranted, and will pursue disciplinary action against the lawyer, if appropriate.

## **To file a complaint:**

Call 410-514-7051 or (in Maryland only) to request a complaint form. Complete, sign and return the form to the Attorney Grievance Commission of Maryland, 100 Community Place, Suite 3301, Crownsville, Maryland 21032-2027. This form can also be downloaded at <http://mdcourts.gov/attygrievance/index.html>

Or:

Write a letter to the above address including your name, address and telephone number; the name, address and telephone number of the lawyer; and a description of the complaint. Receipt of the complaint will be promptly acknowledged.

# Frequently Asked Questions

## **What happens after I file the complaint?**

Your written complaint will be reviewed by a lawyer on staff to determine if there were violations of the Maryland Rules of Professional Conduct. You will be notified of any action or disposition.

## **Will the lawyer find out that I filed a complaint?**

Yes. Usually the lawyer is notified that a complaint has been filed against him or her, and who filed it.

## **Can I find out about prior complaints against this lawyer?**

No. All complaints—either pending or dismissed—are private and confidential. However, you can be told if the lawyer received a public sanction (e.g., disbarment, suspension or reprimand).

## **How do I get back things I may be entitled to, such as fees, other money and documents?**

Although a lawyer's refusal to return money or documents may be the basis for discipline and should be reported, the Commission cannot force a lawyer to return them. You should discuss this with another lawyer who can give you legal advice.

## **What will happen to the case my lawyer was handling?**

The Commission does not represent clients, and it cannot assist in any type of litigation. You will need to seek the services of another lawyer who can assist you with your ongoing legal matter.